

LACDMH Celebrates New Housing for Transitional Age Youth

By H. Chung So, Public Information Officer II



On Oct. 28, 2016, the Cedar Springs Project in La Verne, Calif., celebrated its grand opening with a welcome reception and property open house.

The event was attended by local officials, project supporters, community members and leadership from A Community of Friends and David & Margaret Youth and Family Services, two nonprofits that collaborated to plan, design and build Cedar Springs on David & Margaret's campus.

The \$20-million, 36-unit complex will provide housing to Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and low-income family populations. Cedar Springs will also provide counseling, case management and education services to help transition age youth live healthier, develop skills and find jobs. This includes a commercial retail space that will provide workforce training through its on-site café and store, plus full-time staff to provide on-site medical, mental health, substance abuse and financial services.

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Additionally, Cedar Springs is an environmentally sustainable project that incorporated numerous Earth-friendly features in its design and land-use. This include graywater and storm water capture and reuse for landscaping, using solar power to generate energy and heat water and use of energy-efficient equipment and lighting throughout the facility. As a result, Cedar Springs will meet the requirements for LEED Platinum certification from the U.S. Green

Building Council.

Cedar Springs was conceptualized a decade ago by David & Margaret, who later partnered with A Community of Friends to bring the project to completion. LACDMH is one of the earliest funders of this Cedar Springs, with funds provided by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA).

"We are honored to be a part of this project . . . it is a matter of the heart," said Robin Kay, Ph.D., LACDMH Chief Deputy Director, during the grand opening ceremony.

Kay added this occasion is also special because it is the first MHSA-funded housing project for the past decade in the San Gabriel Valley (Service Area 3), and hoped that similar projects will follow for TAY clients countywide.

Laura Lomeli, a 22-year-old tenant at Cedar Springs, concluded the official ceremony by reading a poem reflecting her experience and struggles as a foster child who has aged out of the system.

"I am very grateful for this opportunity to have a home. Thank you," Lomeli said afterwards.



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